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FOR A FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE
Eleventh session
New York, 6-17 February 1995
Item 9 of the provisional agenda

PROVISION TO DEVELOPING COUNTRY PARTIES OF TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Addendum

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE CLIMATE CONVENTION INFORMATION EXCHANGE PROGRAMME

Note by the interim secretariat and the United Nations Environment Programme

I. Committee mandate

1. At its ninth and tenth sessions, the Committee was informed about the Climate Convention information exchange programme (CC:INFO), formerly known as Climex (see A/AC.237/51 and A/AC.237/75). The Committee noted with satisfaction the progress achieved on CC:INFO and requested the interim secretariat and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to continue their efforts to update the database on a regular basis, to improve modes of dissemination (for example, electronic means, Internet), to increase the variety of information contained within CC:INFO, and to report on further progress to its eleventh session (A/AC.237/76, para. 98).

II. Programme activities to date

2. The database is being updated through regular and frequent communication with key people and organizations that supply, or are potentially able to supply, resources for enabling activities. These contacts, in some cases reinforced by visits from CC:INFO staff, were sent

a copy of the CC:INFO report, and were requested to keep CC:INFO staff informed of new enabling activities of their organizations and new developments in existing enabling activities. Such contacts have served to expand and update the CC:INFO information base. Moreover, these contacts were requested to send to the secretariat project documents and other relevant material for archiving in the newly-established secretariat library. These documents can be re-distributed on request.

3. In addition to its distribution to delegates during the tenth session of the Committee, the CC:INFO report (August 1994) was mailed to 550 persons and organizations worldwide. Only those replying to the accompanying letters will be kept on the distribution list for future updates.

4. The March 1995 edition of the CC:INFO report is currently being prepared and will be available for consultation by delegates during the eleventh session of the Committee. Copies of this report, in its final version, will be distributed to all delegates at the first Conference of the Parties (COP 1) and to the climate change community worldwide during the second quarter of 1995. It is planned to produce the report in two versions, one complete and one abridged.

5. Efforts to make the CC:INFO information base accessible from electronic networks and bulletin boards are also under way. A preliminary version of the CC:INFO on-line report, containing part of the CC:INFO information base, should be available for demonstration, as well as for external access on the Internet, using the World Wide Web server 1/ of the UNEP/World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Information Unit on Climate Change (IUCC). Information from CC:INFO is also distributed on diskette. The first user of this service was the World Bank.

6. Further to comments and suggestions received regarding the first CC:INFO report (August 1994), the "activity matrix" will be incorporated into a set of "country profiles" in the CC:INFO report (March 1995). These profiles, organized in alphabetical order by country name, will provide a concise source of information on the process of implementation of the Convention. Each country profile consists of two sections. The first contains general information about a country, including the dates of signature and ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, the dates of when the national communication is due, when it was received, and who the contact is for the national communication, as well as the name and contact person of a national committee on climate change (where this exists), and other relevant information. The second section includes the updated country information prepared for the activity matrix in the previous CC:INFO report. In the future, other relevant information could be added.

1/ The World Wide Web is a network of computers that use a proprietary system for linking documents across the Internet. Mosaic, the leading WWW front-end software used at the secretariat, is able to access all these computers and the documents.

7. A list of seminars, workshops and other events on issues relating to the implementation of the provisions of the Convention could also be included in the next CC:INFO report. It is also planned to disseminate this list on-line, and to update it on a regular basis. Other improvements in the report include the addition of tables at the beginning of each section to help readers access the information.

8. During the course of the third and fourth quarters of 1994, CC:INFO staff members received and processed approximately 60 requests for assistance to implement enabling activities in developing countries. Information on these funding opportunities have been circulated to a number of organizations (approximately 60) listed in the CC:INFO database as potential suppliers of resources. While it is generally not possible to track each request for assistance, anecdotal evidence is available to demonstrate that these are being used, and funding is being made available for them.

9. CC:INFO staff are planning to develop an information management tool for use by national teams established by the Climate Convention training programme (CC:TRAIN), which is carried out jointly by the interim secretariat and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). This tool, which will consist of a database and a training programme on how to manage information related to the Convention, should enhance the capacity of the country teams to prepare and follow up on national strategies for the implementation of the Convention. In addition, it is expected that this will:

(a) Contribute to the founding of nationwide Climate Convention information management systems;

(b) Foster the integration of national implementation strategies into wider national environmental strategies and plans;

(c) Increase the capacity of CC:INFO to access country-level information; and

(d) Enable countries to tap the global resource base more efficiently.

10. Further to meetings with staff at the Sittard-based (Netherlands) Greenhouse Gas Technology Information Exchange (GREENTIE), it was also decided that an electronic gateway to GREENTIE's on-line dissemination system would be provided in mid-1995 through the IUCC World Wide Web server.

III. Preliminary appraisal of Phase One

11. An internal evaluation of Phase One activities of in 1994 was undertaken by the secretariat using CC:INFO internal files and through informal discussions with users of the CC:INFO report and information base. The original objectives of the programme were "to facilitate and coordinate external support, on request, for activities related to the Convention in developing and other countries" (A/AC.237/38, para. 1). In the same document, it was

mentioned that "focus will be on exchanging information relating to country activities at the national level" and "sources of technical expertise and financial resources" (A/AC.237/38, para. 5).

12. During Phase One, approximately 60 organization profiles were prepared and distributed in print and electronically. The internal evaluation shows that these profiles together provide an accurate map of the world resource base available to support enabling activities in developing and other countries. These organizations supply resources to more than 190 enabling activities at various stages of development worldwide. About 100 general enquiries were also processed during Phase One. These included general requests for information on the CC:INFO programme, requests for information on specific activities and organizations, requests to receive copies of the CC:INFO report and requests to be part of the CC:TRAIN programme.

13. To date, CC:INFO staff have received, processed and circulated to the resource-supply community about 60 requests for assistance. The internal evaluation shows that these funding opportunities are viewed as an effective tool to help supply-side organizations initiate and focus support where this is most needed. Feedback from countries requesting assistance has also been positive, as these requests are viewed as an instrument to effectively access the international resource base. While CC:INFO is not yet extensively used to facilitate channelling assistance to countries, these first 60 requests reinforce the original indication that it could become an effective tool in matching supply with demand.

14. Reactions to the CC:INFO programme were also gathered at various international seminars and meetings, as well as at ad hoc workshops at the ninth and tenth sessions of the Committee. This feedback was very positive; during these events, more than 150 persons asked to be included in the CC:INFO mailing list. In several cases, it was clear that the CC:INFO report was the first opportunity that interested government officials had had of seeing all the climate change related activities presented in one matrix.

15. On these and other occasions, the need was also stated for more substantive information concerning the process of implementation of the commitments under the Convention, such as copies of project documents, and other related information. Since these documents are also used as models for project proposals on similar activities in different countries, their distribution helps to promote and diffuse good practice and processes in implementing the provisions of the Convention.

16. Regular users of CC:INFO information include the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and its Implementing Agencies, bilateral programmes, and government agencies and non-governmental organizations from developed and developing countries. These users have requested, inter alia, information on activities and organizations, copies of the latest requests for assistance and copies of project documents.

17. Several users have also made suggestions on how to improve the quantity and quality of the CC:INFO information. In addition to the preparation of country profiles mentioned above, other suggestions included preparing and distributing a regularly updated list of meetings, seminars and other events, disseminating the CC:INFO information on-line using electronic networks and bulletin boards (for example, Internet and the World Wide Web server) and off-line through diskettes.

18. While it is too early to evaluate the CC:INFO programme, this preliminary appraisal indicates that the programme has become an established and up-to-date source of information. Findings suggest that CC:INFO is meeting the needs of supply-side organizations for information on which enabling activities are being undertaken, where and by whom. The programme is also beginning to respond to the needs of countries for information on available international assistance. Finally, CC:INFO is increasingly being used for both proposals and requests for assistance. Anecdotal evidence suggests that requests proposed through CC:INFO have received funding.

19. These findings indicate that the CC:INFO programme should be continued beyond Phase One. Its activities should be intensified in order to respond to the numerous suggestions made and to improve the timeliness, quantity and quality of the information, as well as its collection and dissemination.

IV. Future developments

20. Based on this evaluation, the goal of the interim secretariat is to strengthen the CC:INFO programme as a service both to Parties and to multilateral and bilateral organizations, including the GEF. UNEP will also continue its substantive support to the programme, and will endeavour to extend financial support. The immediate aim is to improve the information provided through CC:INFO, in accordance with the findings mentioned in paragraph 19 above. CC:INFO staff aim to achieve this goal through strengthening two main areas of the programme: the collection and updating of information and its subsequent processing and distribution; and synergy with other programmes and organizations.

21. In the future, CC:INFO will disseminate information not only on enabling activities, but also on activities carried out by countries after they have fulfilled their first communication requirements, and on organizations focusing their assistance on such activities.

22. Efforts to disseminate information more effectively will centre upon two main areas, printed information and electronic information. As far as the former is concerned, the CC:INFO report (see paragraphs 7-8) above, will be sent to interested people and organizations on the mailing list. Copies of the report will be kept up to date through the periodical mailing of replacement sheets in the form of organization profiles and country profiles.

23. In order to keep printing and postage costs to a minimum, information will continue to be disseminated electronically. CC:INFO information is expected to reach substantially more users as the base of global networks and bulletin boards (such as the Internet) expands. The distribution of information on diskette (as experimented with in the case of the World Bank), will also be continued in order to satisfy those users who do not have access to on-line communication.

24. In addition to providing information to countries and to the broad community of users working in activities related to the Convention, CC:INFO will also respond to needs for an exchange of technical information and experiences of the secretariat technical cooperation programme (CC:COPE) and its informal consultative group (see A/AC.237/90/Add.3).

V. Staff and budget

25. At present, the CC:INFO staff consists of a part-time programme manager, a full-time programme officer, and one database assistant. Technical support for the development of databases, as well as computers and other related services, was provided by the interim secretariat information system. Technical support and facilities have also been provided by IUCC.

26. In the future, the programme manager will increasingly focus on coordinating the efforts of the interim secretariat on technical cooperation. In order to be able to respond to the increasing demands for information, a second programme officer will need to be added to the team in 1995. Moreover, some additional computer hardware needs to be purchased, such as a high-speed, multi-tray printer and a photocopier.

27. In 1994, the cost of CC:INFO was estimated at US$416,000. The Government of Denmark contributed US$200,000 to the programme and UNEP provided US$191,500. The remaining expenses were covered from other extra-budgetary contributions to the trust fund for the negotiating process.

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Addendum

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE TRAINING PROGRAMME TO PROMOTE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

Note by the interim secretariat and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research

I. Background and Committee mandate

1. During its seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth sessions, the Committee was informed about the pilot phase of the joint training programme (CC:TRAIN) of the interim secretariat and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) to promote the implementation of the Convention (see A/AC.237/28, A/AC.237/40, A/AC.237/52 and A/AC.237/75). The Committee noted with satisfaction the progress achieved on CC:TRAIN and requested the interim secretariat and UNITAR to continue their efforts to complete the pilot phase of the programme; to prepare, in the light of the evaluation, a full proposal for the second phase; and to report on further progress to its eleventh session (A/AC.237/76, para.99).

2. CC:TRAIN aims to promote the implementation of the Convention by supporting and strengthening national institutions and processes which facilitate the development of national implementation strategies. The national implementation strategies will lay the institutional

and policy framework for future capacity building and the preparation of the national communication and its technical components, as well as outlining the policy considerations required to integrate climate change responses with national development goals.

II. Programme activities to date

3. In the three participating countries (Lithuania, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe), progress has been made in terms of strengthening the country teams and in preparing the necessary groundwork for conducting climate change studies and developing national implementation strategies. So far, much of the work of the country teams has focused on coordinating the efforts and interests of various governmental agencies in the area of climate change and coordinating bilateral and multilateral assistance relevant to climate change and the Convention.

4. A series of national consultative meetings has started in Viet Nam and Zimbabwe. These meetings aim to assist the various interested agencies and non-governmental actors in the three countries in preparing for participation at the Conference of the Parties (COP). They will also help to coordinate various initiatives related to climate change and technical study projects, as well as current international assistance activities in the three countries.

5. In Viet Nam, the country team has facilitated the ratification of the Convention. A full-time focal point within the country team has also been identified and a small secretariat established with some counterpart funding from the Government to service the country team and other activities related to climate change. The country team, for example, will be serving as coordinators for a bilateral sealevel rise study.

6. In Zimbabwe, a full-time focal person has likewise been identified who will head a small secretariat to service the country team. One of the tasks of the secretariat is to help coordinate the various climate change related projects in Zimbabwe and to ensure that these projects are harmonized within a coherent policy and institutional framework.

7. In Lithuania, progress has been slowed by the reorganization of the Environment Protection Department, which is now the Environment Protection Ministry. However, efforts are under way to enable the country team to work under the coordination of the Environment Protection Ministry.

8. Nationals designated by the country teams from Viet Nam and Lithuania have attended technical training workshops organised by the United States Country Studies Programme on national inventory and vulnerability assessment, which also provided follow-up technical assistance. The participation of these nationals was part of the cooperative arrangement developed between CC:TRAIN and the United States Country Studies Programme.

9. Work on the CC:TRAIN training packages continues. A first version of the information package on climate change and the Convention will be available during the eleventh session of the Committee. The guidance package on formulating national implementation strategies should be ready, as expected, in March 1995.

10. Contributors to the development of the training packages include the UNEP Collaborating Centre on Energy and the Environment (UNEP/RISØ), the Environmental and Social Impacts Group of the United States National Centre for Atmospheric Research, and the United States Country Studies Programme.

III. Programme evaluation

11. In October 1994, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted an evaluation of the pilot phase. This involved missions to the three participating countries and meetings with the responsible parties at UNDP, the interim secretariat and UNITAR. The evaluation was undertaken halfway through the pilot phase in order to determine whether the pilot phase programme was meeting its original objectives, and to provide guidance for the remaining portion of the programme, as well as to assist in the development and appraisal of a full phase project.

12. The evaluation confirmed the validity of the objectives and approach of CC:TRAIN and, in general, encouraged further support for the establishment of effective country teams on the implementation of the Convention. Its findings and recommendations may be grouped into three areas: a preliminary assessment of the current pilot phase; guidance for the remaining period of the pilot phase; and recommendations for the next phase of CC:TRAIN.

13. The evaluation made the following assessment with respect to the first nine months of the programme:

(a) Clearly CC:TRAIN alone will not result in countries being able to meet all of their commitments under the Convention nor could it fully succeed in helping countries integrate climate change strategies in existing and future development plans;

(b) The first round of national workshops and seminars was successful in raising awareness about the Convention and initiating a process for policy dialogue, but greater effort and more resources are needed immediately after the workshops in order to sustain the interest and momentum generated;

(c) While the "country team" approach is appropriate, certain changes in the timing of assistance must be made in order to address the specific needs of policy makers and the technical personnel involved. For example, the national workshop should be made more distinct from the country team seminar;

(d) The institutional arrangements for the programme between UNDP and UNITAR should have been more direct; this would have avoided the delay in launching the programme and minimized administrative overheads. On the other hand, significant institutional linkages with relevant bilateral and multilateral programmes have been established which increase the impact of the programme at the national level;

(e) While certain measures have been taken to reduce the administrative costs, most notably the reallocation of funds for the post of programme manager to the development of training resources, more resources are necessary both to develop the training resources and to support the work of the country teams;

(f) It was unrealistic to expect that a set of global training and information resources could have been developed during the first three months of the programme. In addition, the scope and costs of the task were underestimated and this has led to some delays and changes.

14. For the remaining nine months of the pilot phase, the evaluation recommended the following:

(a) More resources should be allocated to supporting the activities of country teams, developing training resources and providing guidance on the development of national implementation strategies;

(b) The role of the country teams should be made more explicit, and specific guidance on how they are to be organized, how they should function and how they could improve results, should be provided. In particular, a full-time focal point in the country team should be supported and provided with more resources to service the team;

(c) In addition, the country teams should be more actively supported to help them evolve into national committees with specific political mandates and dedicated resources to carry out the task of developing national implementation strategies;

(d) UNDP and UNITAR should work to improve the involvement of the UNDP country offices in supporting the work of country teams;

(e) For the remaining period, CC:TRAIN should focus on and devote more resources to the development of the training packages already identified as essential materials for the effective work of the country teams.

15. For the next phase of CC:TRAIN, the evaluation recommended the following:

(a) The next phase should consider developing regional networks of support institutions in the implementation of the programme in order to establish a more regular, or even continuous, presence in the participating countries;

(b) Based on the experience in the pilot phase, a longer time period -- between two and three years -- should be considered for programme implementation.

D. Plans for Phase II

16. A project document on CC:TRAIN Phase II has been prepared for submission to the GEF Council in April 1995. Several recommendations in the UNDP evaluation report have been incorporated in the project document. An independent technical review by the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel of the project document has already been conducted. The review made several positive suggestions and further confirmed the concept, approach and objectives of CC:TRAIN.